



# THE LAY EXPRESS



Second Episcopal District ~ African Methodist Episcopal Church  
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE LAY ORGANIZATION

Website: <http://wncclay.org/>

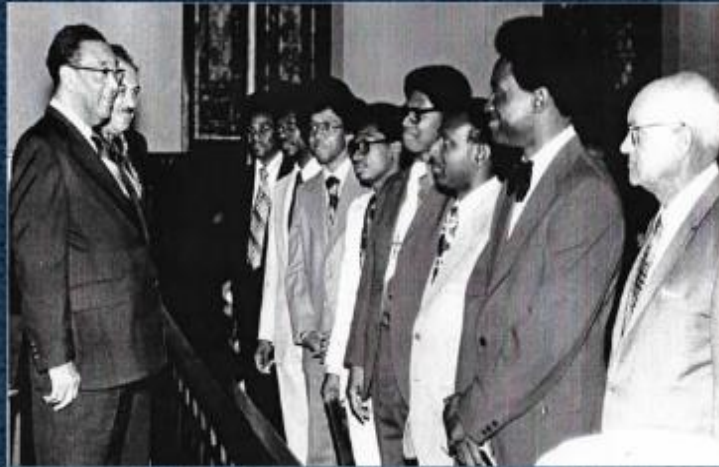
VOLUME IV

MAY 2018

ISSUE 5

*This issue of THE LAY EXPRESS is dedicated to the ministry of God's servant, Reverend J. Bernard Wilder, the Presiding Elder of the Eastern District of the Western North Carolina Conference. The comments and pictures, in this newsletter, has been compiled into a book and presented to Presiding Elder Wilder on May 17, 2018 at the WNCC Annual Conference held in Raleigh, North Carolina.*

*The Second  
Episcopal  
District  
of the  
African  
Methodist  
Episcopal  
Church  
Western North  
Carolina  
Conference  
Lay  
Organization  
celebrates the  
Retirement &  
Legacy of...*



**\*\* 53 Years in Ministry \*\***



Reverend Jasper Bernard Wilder, Presiding Elder  
Eastern District

From  
*the desk*  
of...

*Penny S. Oliver, President*



The leadership of Presiding Elder Jasper Bernard Wilder, I believe, can be described in the following scriptural texts:

*I Corinthians 12:31 tells us of a more excellent way. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (I Corinthians 13:4-8a).*

When I was elected President of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization Presiding Elder Wilder shared with me the words of encouragement that I carry with me in my presidency and personal life:

“The key to becoming a great leader is serving your team and everyone around you by putting them first. If you do, **you'll be paid back in full with loyalty, hard work and extraordinary results.**”

**Love Your Team** - Each person has been created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and each of them has been gifted by God in special ways (1 Corinthians 12:11). They are people who all have hopes, dreams, fears and struggles. And every single one deserves to be treated with respect, dignity and a caring heart.

**Give Praise** - *That means a little praise can go a long way, so start making a habit of catching people doing something right—and let them know about it.*

**Seldom Use Your Power** - A leader realizes the only power they can use is persuasion. **Don't lead with threats and fear.**

**Cast Your Vision** - *If you play for something bigger than yourself, you play much harder and smarter. And the same holds true for your team. They work harder because there's a sense of calling. So how do you let your team know they are doing something important? Repeatedly tell them what they're working for and why. Share your vision early and often.*

Presiding Elder Wilder, you have encouraged, supported and prayed for the Western North Carolina Conference and we stand to salute you for your love, wisdom and presence. God has called you and placed you where you are for His purpose. With His leadership you fulfilled His call in your life and one day hear, "Well done my good and faithful servant."

Thank you for your willingness to serve!

**PRESIDING ELDER J. BERNARD WILDER**

As you prepare for retirement, I wish to add my voice to the many others who applaud your many years of outstanding service both as Pastor and Presiding Elder.

Your thoughtful instruction both to laity and clergy (during Annual Lay Institutes), your wise counsel, your productive comments during meetings and conferences, and your superb leadership, will all be missed. Like others, I will continue to seek your wise counsel from time to time.

We wish for you, Presiding Elder Wilder, and Sister Sarah Wilder a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Respectfully submitted by,

Reverend Dr. Conrad K. Pridgen  
Presiding Elder  
Western District  
Western North Carolina Conference





## *African Methodist Episcopal Church Lay Organization*

Congratulations to  
Presiding Elder Wilder and  
Sister Sarah Wilder!

Thank you for your years of  
service to God and His people. May  
you have a blessed retirement.  
Gods speed and much gratitude  
for all you have done and will  
continue to do and thanks for your  
support.

Dwight Patterson, President  
Second Episcopal District  
Lay Organization

Dear Presiding Elder Wilder,

The North Carolina Conference Lay Organization  
wish you all of Gods continued blessings as go into  
retirement from being a Presiding Elder, but not  
retirement for carrying Gods Word throughout the  
conference. May you enjoy life to the fullest doing all  
those things you said you were going to do, but never  
got around to doing. Life is short and precious, enjoy  
it. Stop to smell the coffee, enjoy the cool evening  
breeze, and most of all enjoy your family and loved  
ones.

A quote from an unknown author express it well the  
time which has gone will never come again, this time  
is yours, you dont need to pretend, no more saying  
yes to someone else, because now you are your own  
boss.

Congratulations!

*Edna*

Edna Watson, President  
North Carolina Conference Lay Organization

## **WORDS** *of wisdom*

This is my command - be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God  
is with you wherever you go.  
Joshua 1:9 (NLT)

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and  
right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.  
Philippians 4:8 (NLT)

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's  
will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. ~ 1 Thessalonians 5:16 - 18 (NLT)

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD; I HAVE ALL THAT I NEED.  
PSALM 23:1 (NLT)



**Presiding Elder J. Bernard Wilder (left) and Trustee Louis Smith (right) setting the bell at St. James AME Church~Winston Salem, NC (Former pastor of St. James)**

Presiding Elder Wilder as you sit back and look over your life and your hands behind your head and relaxing in that recliner thinking of all that GOD has done for you Raise your hands and SHOUT! THANK YOU! Congratulations! Good Wishes! Kudos! Applause!

Byron and Sonia Barbre  
St. James A.M.E. Church-Winston-Salem, NC

*Congratulations! Keep well and hang in there..May God continue to bless you.*

*Vivian Rollins*

*St. James A.M.E. Church Winston-Salem, NC*

My Dear Elder Wilder:

Today is a happy day and a sad day for me. I am happy that I came to know and love you. I thank you for your guidance and support; I thank you for your love; I thank you for being you! It has truly been a pleasure to be associated with you for the last 16 years. My wish and prayer for you and your family is to have a wonderful time of retirement. Rejoice in the Lord. May God continue to bless and keep you!!!!

*Constance D. Pearson*

Blessed Assurance Congratulations on your retirement, God is Good All the time. ~ Irene Allen and Family  
St. James A.M.E. Church-Winston-Salem, NC

Congratulations and best wishes. May God continue to bestow abundant blessings upon you always!

Veronica M. Ford

St. James A.M.E. Church-Winston-Salem, NC

"Presiding Elder Wilder, I remember when you preached from the pulpit and throw your handkerchief up in the air and shouted to Ron ...Hit It! Enjoy your retirement. Rosetta Kirkpatrick  
St. James A.M.E. Church-Winston-Salem, NC

Presiding Elder J. Bernard Wilder & Mrs. Sarah P. Wilder

Praise God for your years of Service  
Praise God for your years of Witness  
Praise God for your years of Labors unto the Lord

We are grateful for the way in which the Lord has used you to Minister and guide HIS people, expanding HIS kingdom, allowing all to see the way of the cross.

May you enjoy your retirement from Itinerant Ministry, yet be empowered to continue the work HE has ordained the both of you to do.

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. ~ Acts 20:24

God love you and keep you is our prayer.

The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Steven L. Lyons  
& the entire  
St. James AME Church Family  
Winston-Salem, NC

It is difficult for us to find the appropriate words that will express our thanks and appreciation for all that you have done for the A. M.E. Church and for us as a friend and member of our family.

We say to God Be The Glory! We are thankful for your prayers, your support as Gertrude served as WNCC Lay President and Second Episcopal District Lay President. We are thankful for your prayers as both of you (Lamont & yourself) were patients at Duke University Hospital at the same time. We both have been through some valleys but look at what God has done for all of us. Thanks for your many acts of kindness both monetary and supportive.

We wish for you a Retirement that will allow you to do all the things that youve dreamed of doing and that health issues will not interfere!!

Enjoy yourself and enjoy time with Mrs Wilder.

Happy Retirement

With all of our love,  
Lamont & Gertrude Upperman



The Mount Zion AME Church Family, in Hillsborough, NC congratulates you, Presiding Elder J. Bernard Wilder on the occasion of your retirement. As a former Pastor of Mount Zion, you studied to show yourself approved and served the body of Christ in a manner that pleased God and the leadership of the AME Church. You have been an obedient servant who loved God with your heart and led men, women, and children to Christ. We will be forever be grateful for your wisdom, leadership, training, love, patience, and understanding.

For your faithfulness in doing His work, it is your time. Be blessed as you enjoy the next season of your life.

Rev. Shelton T. Miles, Pastor and the Mt. Zion AME Church Family

Presiding Elder Wilder, thank you for your friendship. This job can be lonely at times. You have been an understanding and forgiving leader. Thank you for all the checks you've thrown away and covered! Blessed is what I am to be able to say Wilder... "That's my Elder!"  
 Enjoy Retirement.  
 Rev. Toma R. Shaw, Pastor ~ Piney Grove AME Church (Raleigh, NC)



Rev. Maye E. Riddick and Pearson Memorial AME Church (High Point, NC) express sincere congratulations to Presiding Elder J. Bernard Wilder upon your well-deserved retirement. We applaud your dignity, integrity, and compassion which were hallmarks of your service. May the Spirit of the living God abide with you and give you strength as you enter these glory years!!!





TO: OFFICERS, MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF  
ST. JAMES A.M.E. CHURCH

FROM: J. BERNARD WILDER  
MINISTER

GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE TO YOU FROM GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I AM GRATEFUL TO HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE OVER THE AFFAIRS OF ST. JAMES A.M.E. CHURCH FOR THE FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR. THE YEAR 1980 SEEMS AS YESTERDAY. FOR IT IS A PRIVILEGE AND A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH THE GOOD PEOPLE OF ST. JAMES, BOTH MINISTERS AND LAITY.

O! THE MIRACLES, I HAVE SEEN PERFORMED IN THE LIVES OF MEN AND WOMEN AND THE GLORIOUS VICTORIES ACHIEVED, IN WHAT MANY CONSIDERED IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS. IN A SENSE, I HAVE SEEN THE ANGELS DESCENDING AND ASCENDING WITH PALMS OF VICTORY IN THEIR HANDS. WE HAVE EXPERIENCED MOMENTS OF GRACE AND GLORY.

AS WE OBSERVE OUR NINETY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY, I AM FOREVER PRAYING THAT WE CONTINUE PRESSING "THE UPWARD WAY." THE WAY IS NOT GOING TO BE ROSY BUT IF WE BELIEVE AND TRUST IN GOD, NOTHING AND NO ONE SHALL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR MISSION.

NOW LET US PREPARE TO FORGE AHEAD AND MAKE FAITH HALL (ADDITIONAL BUILDING) AND EDUCATION WING A REALITY. THEREFORE, LET US RE-ESTABLISH OURSELVES TO BE OF GREATER SERVICE TO THE CAUSE OF KINGDOM BUILDING AND OUR COMMUNITY. FOR "IN DUE SEASON WE SHALL REAP IF WE FAINT NOT."



TO: THE ST. JAMES A.M.E. CHURCH FAMILY

AS WE PAUSE IN CELEBRATION, LET US ALSO PAUSE IN THANKS TO GOD OUR FATHER FOR ALL THE BLESSINGS SO GRACIOUSLY GRANTED TO ST. JAMES DURING HER 98 YEARS OF KINGDOM BUILDING.

WE WISH TO THANK GOD AND YOU FOR THIS GRAND OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE HIM AND YOU AT THIS TIME IN THE HISTORY OF ST. JAMES A.M.E. CHURCH. IT IS A VERY UNIQUE PRIVILEGE IN HISTORY AND JOY UNKNOWN TO SERVE IN THAT GOD HAS BROUGHT US A MIGHTY LONG WAY WITH HIS MERCY, PEACE, LOVE AND THE UNITY OF HIS PECULIAR PEOPLE. IT IS BOTH EXCITING AND REWARDING TO SEE HOW EACH OF US BLOSSOM AND GROW TOWARD PERFECTION.

EYES HAVE NOT YET SEEN NOR EARS HEARD WHAT GREAT IMPACT ST. JAMES SHALL HAVE IN THIS ERA, IN THE COMMUNITY, THE STATE, THE NATION. WE, THEREFORE, TRUST THAT WE (CHURCH FAMILY) RESOLVE ANEW, TO STRIVE EARNESTLY TO WATCH, WORK AND PRAY THAT GOD WILL BE MANIFESTED IN OUR LIVES.

WHERE WE NOW WORSHIP IS "HOME" ----- A "HOME" THAT OUR FEET MAY LEAVE, BUT NOT OUR HEARTS.

YOUR SHEPHERD AND FRIEND  
REV. J. BERNARD WILDER





USHER BOARD



SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD



BLESSED ARE THE  
PURE IN *heart*,  
FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD.

MATTHEW 5:8

WE LOVE YOU!



When you  
 stop living  
 at work and  
 start working  
 at living  
 Retirement

Elder@ Greater Bethel  
 Steward Youngblood  
 Trustee Chandler



Elder Wilder has given me thoughtful advice during my  
 tenure as a trustee at Greater Bethel AME Church  
 (Charlotte, NC)

Rory Wayne Chandler.  
 Rev. Morris Reddon, Pastor



Presiding Elder Wilder, cheers to your well-earned  
 retirement. The contributions that you have imparted to  
 the WNCC are invaluable. You are one of the  
 foundations of this great church of Zion. Congratulations!

Sherman Summers  
 Springdale AME Church (Burlington, NC)  
 Rev. Robert Goode, Pastor



Who is that standing at  
the end of the line?  
Rev. J. Bernard Wilder

Standing beside him is  
Rev. A. O. Carmichael.

Can you spot  
Presiding Elder Tyson  
Coble and Rev. Philip  
Cousin, Sr.?



It is with great pleasure that I say CONGRATULATIONS to you and Sister Sarah not only for your leadership, but for your friendship over the past 53 years.

As I had watched your ordination as an Itinerant Elder, little did I know that one day you would be my Presiding Elder. Your leadership has been excellent and I would like to say "Thank you". Thank you for the service you have provided to the Church of Allen, Western North Carolina Conference, and Eastern District.

My prayer is as you mount your White Horse and ride in the sunset of retirement, relax and enjoy the fruits of your labor. No more meetings to make, reports to complete, phone calls to return except the personal ones.

May you continue to seek the Lord while He is found and call upon Him while He is near.

God bless and keep you in His care.  
Emma Devine, Emmanuel AME Church~Durham, NC

Presiding Elder Wilder: One season of your life has ended, and you are now stepping into the best season yet. Best wishes on your retirement. ~ Sister Pauline and Brother John (Willie Clay) Summers. Springdale AME Church (Burlington, NC) ~ Rev. Robert Goode, Pastor



Thanks for your years of commitment and leadership for all of us. Success is not measured by the things you acquire, but the lives you touch. We are so blessed because our paths have crossed. Brother Steward Manning ~ St. James AME Church (Raleigh, NC), Rev. Phyllis T. Royal, Pastor





Quarterly Conference at Living Waters AME Church (Raleigh, NC)~Rev. Allonia Holmes, Pastor



WNCC Eastern District Heritage Tour - 2017



Presiding Elder Wilder, may God continue to bless you and your family.  
 Rev. Myratte McGibboney, Pastor and the White Cross AME Church (Efland, NC)

Thanks for all the memories that we shared together, Annual Conferences, District Conferences, Breakfast and the many Lunches. Melvin and I will always cherish your Leadership and friendship. Love you always. Sister Elizabeth and Brother Melvin Hooker, Lincolville AME Church (Raleigh, NC).  
 Rev. Wayne Beatty, Pastor



Elder, you hold a special place in my heart. Thank you for the way you cared for us, shared with us and taught us through the years. May God continue to bless you tremendously! Sister Ruth Youngblood ~ Greater Bethel AME Church (Charlotte, NC)  
 Rev. Morris Reddon, Pastor



May The Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. Congratulations! Love from Willow Tree AME Church School (Morganton, NC)  
 Rev. Wanda Howell, Pastor.



Congratulations on finally getting to this place of retirement. Your hard work over the years is finally paying off and now you are free to be all you ever wanted to be.  
 Rev. T.O. Nixon, Pastor  
 St. Stephens AME Church (Wilmington, NC)



I am (Steward) Cynthia Vaughn from Greater Bethel AMEC-Charlotte. Elder Wilder is awesome! He is kind and generous. He is strong and gentle. He is loyal and trustworthy. He is smart and capable. I have much love, much admiration and much respect for him. He is the best. He is my ELDER!  
 Rev. Morris Reddon, Pastor

You are Appreciated!

To: Pastor J. B. Wilder, Presiding Elder

When Im asked to name two great apostles in the Bible, the names that come to mind are the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter. However, one apostle that played a critical role in the New Testament is the Apostle Barnabus. Barnabuss original name was Joseph (Jasper). Joseph became Barnabus (Bernard), the Son of Encouragement.

When the Apostle Paul first started out in his ministry, he was discouraged after becoming a Christian, because the people hated him as a traitor. God sends Barnabus to be an encourager to Paul. He embraced Paul when no other leaders would. When the Christians were scared, Barnabus words of support removed many fears. His encouragement led to their acceptance of Paul, and the expansion of the Lords ministry.

Elder Wilder, you have been our Barnabus (our encourager). Youve always shown support for my ministry and stood with my family and me in some very challenging times. You provided wisdom when uncertainty held us bound and doubtful. You have always demonstrated yourself to be a strong and competent leader. This was while you dealt with your own health issues. You and Sarah (our district first lady) prayed encouragement to my Spirit. Thank you!

In fact, when the Eastern District churches had financial woes, you took your personal funds to bail them out. Like Barnabus, he, as well, sold a field that he had and brought the money to the apostles and laid it at their feet to be used for others. You kept a watchful eye over the Eastern District assessments and aided the congregates.

Elder everyone involved in ministry needs a Barnabus in their lives to keep them motivated in times of difficulty and to preserve their laughter despite hardship. Thank you, again from my family and me. We are very proud to say that you are our Barnabus in ministry. It could not have happened without your faith, your love for God and your encouragement, that you provided as our leader.

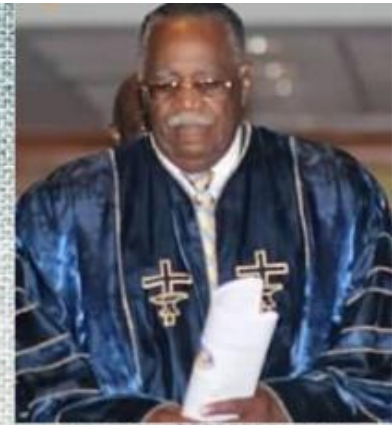
May you and Sarah along with the Wilder family continue to receive the blessings of our Savior in Heaven!

In God we Trust,

Pastor Anita and the late Benjamin Thompson  
Emmanuel AME Church, Durham, NC







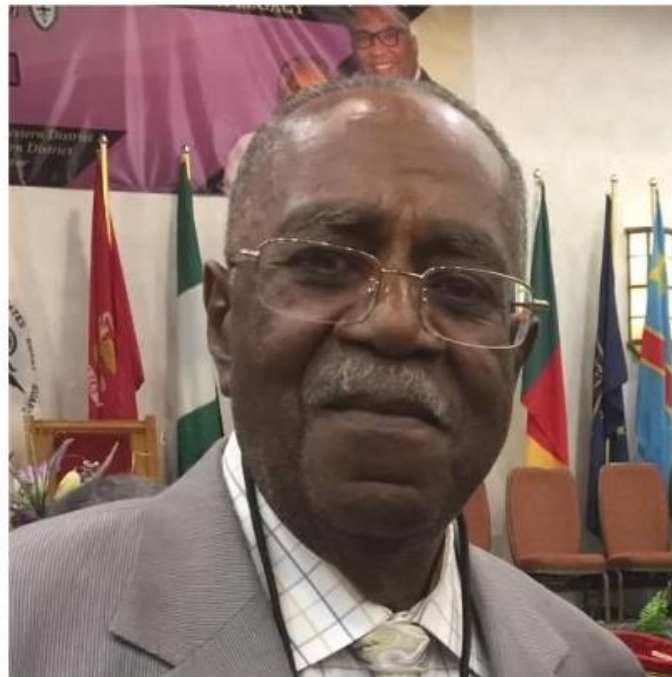
As a pastor, presiding elder and friend, you have demonstrated you understand the principles of exercising the love of God. What you have done for the individual, collective and universal church will never be forgotten, but will leave a permanent impression in the hearts and spirit of all you have touched. We love you for who God has called you to be and for your obedience in answering and walking therein. Enjoy the next chapters of your journey.

Dwyane and Angela Elam  
Hunter's Chapel AME Church (Mebane, NC)

Greetings Elder Wilder, on behalf of the Shiloh AMEC Lay Organization, it is bittersweet that we bid you farewell after 53 years of service to the church. On the journey you served our congregation during good and bad times, enduring to this end.

But it is only the beginning, God has the final reward. It remains to be seen what God has for you. We thank your wife for enduring the travels, far and near. God's Blessings be with you.

Carolyn Fleming  
Lay President  
Shiloh AME Church  
(Morganton, NC)



Presiding Elder Wilder, I thank God for your leadership and dedication to the AME Church family. May God continue to bless you with wisdom, love, and kindness.

Robert Jones  
Hunter's Chapel AME Church  
(Mebane, NC)

Congratulations on your retirement. I pray it will be a blessed one. God bless you and your family.

Jennifer R. Terrell  
Trustee Pro Tem  
Hunter's Chapel AME Church  
(Mebane, NC)

My Dear Elder, you are an awesome person! I honor and cherish the wisdom, love and your care for all people. Through it all, you have trusted God even when things got rough. I just want you to remember this: Daniel 3:17. The God we serve is able to deliver us.

Love,  
Cherri Stinson & Family ~ Mt. Zion AME Church (Hillsborough, NC)



Presiding Elder Wilder, prayers for your health recovery, enjoying more time with family and friends, be able to travel at your pleasure. May God continue to bless you!

Sheila Degreaffenreidt  
Hunter's Chapel AME Church (Mebane, NC )



Elder Wilder, thank you for being, for allowing God to use you. You're an awesome Man of God! May the work you've done speak for you. Continue to look to the hills from whence all of your help and strength comes from. For all of our help and strength comes from the Lord. Congratulations on your retirement.

Dot Brooks ~ Hunter's Chapel AME Church (Mebane, NC)

Dear Presiding Elder Wilder, when I first met you, you were very nice and it made me feel like I had always known you. You are truly a Man of God!

Penny Glasco ~ Hunter's Chapel AME Church (Mebane, NC)

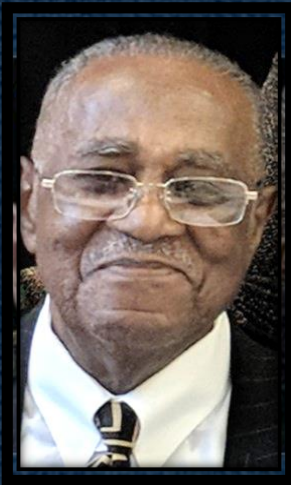
Presiding Elder Wilder, thank you for your obedience to God's calling upon your life. May God continue to keep you on this journey. I pray for your continued strength and passion in the Lord.

Natasha Adams  
Macedonia AME Church (Milton, NC)  
Hunter's Chapel AME Church (Mebane, NC)



## *Again, Congratulations!*

Presiding Elder  
J. Bernard  
Wilder and First  
Lady Sarah  
Wilder!



*53 years in ministry!*

636 Months  
2,764 Weeks  
19,345 Days  
464,280 Hours



To God be the Glory  
To God be the Glory,  
To God be the Glory,  
For the things He has done

Credit: Andrae' Crouch

“YOU’VE BEEN FAITHFUL, YOU’VE BEEN TRUE, AND YOU’VE DONE ALL THAT YOU CAN DO AND FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS, IT’S YOUR TIME.

YOU APPLAUDED FOR THE REST. NOW IT’S YOUR TIME TO BE BLESSED, AND FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS, IT’S YOUR TIME!

YOU ENCOURAGED EVERYONE ELSE, WHEN YOU NEEDED IT FOR YOURSELF AND FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS, IT’S YOUR TIME.”

(Credit: Luther Barnes)

# WORDS OF THANKS AND APPRECIATION!

The Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization would like to thank everyone who contributed congratulatory messages and well-wishes to Presiding Elder J. Bernard Wilder for the compilation of the book presented to Elder Wilder as well as this newsletter.

Special thanks to Reverend Phyllis Royal, Emma Devine, Sonia Barbre, Cynthia Vaughn, Niki Allen, Kenneth Woods, Ruth Youngblood, Dwyane Elam, and Shirley L. Smith for providing the pictures.

With God, all things are possible!

Angela Elam, WNCC Public Relations Volunteer  
Shontea Smith, WNCC Public Relations Volunteer